



# Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Produced by:  
Anthony A. Adams  
Christine Mallory

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*Volume II*

## Rappahannock River Valley Staff

*Acting Refuge Manager*  
Merry Maxwell

*Wildlife Biologist*  
Sandy Spencer

*Administrative Support Assistant*  
Frances Murphey

*Maintenance Worker*  
Gary Bareford

*Park Ranger/Law Enforcement*  
Dustin Martin

*Biological Technician*  
Patrick Hegge

*STEP*  
Ricky Coston  
Megan Davis  
Kyran Belfield  
Rebecca Funk

*SCA*  
Christine Mallory  
Anthony A. Adams

## Refuge to the Rescue!



As students waited anxiously for lunch, WB Sandy Spencer walked into the office and stated that an osprey needed help. The eager interns hopped up and quickly drove to the Capt. Thomas' boat launch area in Tappahannock where an osprey had been tangled in an old trash bag. On the way, the crew paused briefly to save a turtle from being crushed by passing motorists. When they arrived at the scene, they found the juvenile bird squawking loudly on the bank. Biologist Spencer draped a jacket over the bird to calm it, while Ricky Coston cut the bag loose. The osprey was then brought to shore where it was determined that the bird couldn't fly. Spencer transported the osprey to a Rehabilitation Center where students later learned the bird still had some of the trash bag wrapped around his talon which might cut off blood supply to his leg if it had not been removed quickly. What an exciting day!

## Come Walk With Nature!

Students are leading nature walks on the Hutchinson Tract on Fridays beginning July 16<sup>th</sup> and continuing through August 13<sup>th</sup>. They will be sharing interesting facts on birds, plants, trees, the trail, the refuge, and even about their experiences as students. People are encouraged to come out and experience nature one-on-one with the interns of Rappahannock!

## Ricky Returns!

After a three week detail working in the Office of Budget and Workplace Performance located in Arlington, Virginia, Ricky Coston has returned to his usual duties at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This detail to Arlington was coordinated by Larry Williams and Joseph McCauley. Ricky worked on several projects, and has learned a great deal about the budget system and the National Wildlife Refuge system in general. He is very thankful for the experience.



## SCAs go to Back Bay!



On July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Student Conservation Association interns Christine Mallory and Anthony Adams were given the opportunity to work at Back Bay NWR. In addition to being able to experience another refuge, they got the opportunity to interact with people during the busy Independence Day weekend. They were given the task of working at the northern border of Back Bay NWR and the Virginia Beach public beach and informing everyone of why the area was closed. They stressed the importance of protecting endangered wildlife, in this case the Loggerhead Turtles and Piping Plovers, and how some areas need to be closed off in order to do so. Not only did they get to explain these things, they also got to talk about the Student Conservation Association (SCA) program, Back Bay NWR, Rappahannock River Valley NWR, and the refuge system.

*But you gotta have friends...*

*The Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends is an independent, nonprofit group of individuals dedicated to supporting the National Wildlife Refuge System. They also promote awareness of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge through education and support.*

# Spot Light!



*Megan happily receiving her "Super Hero" award at a recent staff meeting. Way to go, Megan!*

After conducting a Bobwhite Survey at the Hutchinson Tract in Tappahannock, VA, Megan and another STEP student were traveling back to Wilna Office when, as a result of the heat, the other student fainted. Although Megan had not been given training to deal with a serious situation like this, she followed proper procedures and safely transported the victim to the hospital until Law Enforcement Officer Martin arrived.

This event allowed students at the Refuge to realize the important of heat safety and the proper ways to be hydrated and cooled in the warm weather of summer.

*In the fall, Megan will be entering Pennsylvania State University on several scholarships including a full in-state tuition scholarship to pursue a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. She is entering with 54 college credits as a result of college courses taken throughout her last three years in high school. She plans to stay in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a career.*

# Spot Light!



*Gary modeling for the newsletter with one PPE missing, can you figure out what it is?*

“Safety” is the name of the game and it’s played out here everyday. Before we start working Gary asks, “What are some potential dangers you see and how can we prevent it from happening?” At this point, the interns take turns listing dangers and how they can be prevented. The idea is that if all of us (the interns) are aware of the dangers we are less likely to hurt our co-workers or ourselves. We are also more likely to point something out that someone else might not think of. It is safe to say that since we have been taking part in these short meetings with Gary there have not been any accidents while working on our projects.

Let’s see what you know about safety! Using the picture of Gary above answer the following questions:

What important Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is missing?

What are some potential dangers in working on a project with a chainsaw and how can you prevent an accident from happen with this equipment?

# Gotta love the summer interns!

So what have the interns been up to this summer? Well, a lot actually! The summer is a great time for the refuge to get work done, and the extra help is definitely a plus! Here's a brief list of what's been accomplished and what's in the works this summer!

## **Kids' Fishing Day**

Rappahannock invites kids to a day at Wilna pond full of educational activities and fun!

## **Rivah Fest**

Rappahannock engages the town of Tappahannock in refuge activities.

## **It's not just for ducks...**

Interns promoted the sale of the duck stamp at local post offices.

## **Wilna Gardens**

Students weeded and maintain the gardens at the Wilna administrative office and at the Wilna lodge. They also constructed a trail through the Wilna lodge garden.

## **Removed Silt Screens**

At the Wilna, Tayloe, and Hutchinson tracts, students helped remove silt screens and stakes, which were constructed to reduce erosion. Screens were not biodegradable and could have potentially harmed wildlife.

## **Tree Tube Maintenance**

Tree tube maintenance was conducted by the students at the Wellford and Tayloe tracts.

## **Gabion Stone**

The interns helped put gabion stone into ditches at the Hutchinson tract to slow water velocity and protect roads.



Above: Filming the Safety Video  
Anthony filming and Kyran narrating



Above: Ricky and Christine at Rivah Fest



Above: Intern Anthony performing  
maintenance to a tree tube

# Gotta love the summer interns!

(continued)



Working at Laurel Grove  
Above from left to right:  
Megan, Anthony, Kyran, Christine



Bird walk with Sandy the Wildlife Biologist  
Left to right  
Christine, Megan Kyran, Inigo, Rebecca and Sandy

## **Bird Walks with the Biologist**

Every Monday, students go out with Biologist Sandy Spencer and learn about birds and other various aspects of the refuge.

## **Native Bee Survey**

Along with the biologist, students conducted a native bee survey at various fields at the Wilna tract. They also learned about the importance of pollinators and native plants.

## **Bob White Survey**

Interns Megan Davis and Kyran Belfield are currently conducting a Bob White quail survey.

## **Laurel Grove**

Students are currently helping maintenance staff and volunteers to prepare refuge quarters at the Laurel Grove Tract, including removing invasive bamboo.

## **Safety Video**

Students are currently compiling a safety video with various safety tips for training future interns.

## **A Walk With Nature**

Students are currently leading nature walks on the Hutchinson Tract every Friday morning.

## **Ricky in Arlington**

Intern Ricky Coston went to the Arlington office for a three-week detail.

## ***Look what we saw....***

A Red-tailed hawk has just caught a rat snake right in front of the refuge headquarters and is struggling to figure out how to enjoy a great meal!

